

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /056 W

-----091011Z 092900 /17

P R 090857Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7158

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2881

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, MY

SUBJECT: UMNO DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 1446 DTG 090016Z MAR 77

(B) KUALA LUMPUR 1582 DTG 140802Z MAR 77

1. SUMMARY: UMNO OFFICIAL STATES PARTY MEETING NEXT WEEK WILL PROVIDE VENUE FOR MAJOR ATTEMPT TO HEAL RIFTS CENTERED ON FATE OF FALLEN MALAYS POLITICAL IDOL DATUK HARUN IDRIS, INCLUDING POSSIBILITY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO PARTY ITSELF SEEKING ROYAL PARDON ON HIS BEHALF FROM OUTSTANDING CORRUPTION CONVICTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2 ACCORDING TO UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGAINZATION (UMNO) EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AADIB ADAM, MAY 11, OBSERVANCES IN KUALA LUMPUR OF THIRTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF UMNO WILL PROVIDE VENUE FOR MAJOR EFFORT TO PATCH UP PARTY PROBLEMS CENTERED ON HARUN IDRIS ISSUE AND DISSENSION CREATED BY PARTY'S "OLD GUARD" FACTION (LOCAL PRESS REPORTS HAVE BILLED IT CONFIDENTIAL

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AS AN OCCASION FOR A "VERY IMPORTANT" SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER/ACTING UMNO PRESIDENT DATUK HUSSIN ONN). "OLD GUARD" LEADER, FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN IS SCHEDULED TO ATTEND, AS IS HARUN HIMSELF. A KEY FOCUS OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES MEETINGS WILL BE AN EFFORT TO DEVISE A FORMULA WHEREBY THE PARTY CAN INITIATE A REQUEST FOR A ROYAL PARDON ON HARUN'S BEHALF, SINCE HARUN IS RELUCTANT TO DO SO HIMSELF AS HE WOULD IN EFFECT BE ADMITTING

HIS GUILT.

3. ADIB SAID THAT THE PARTY FACES THE DILEMA OF CONCERN FOR ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF RULE OF LAW ON ONE HAND AND THE NEED TO RETAIN THE LOYALTY OF THE CHARISMATIC HARUN AND HIS FOLLOWERS ON THE OTHER. A ROYAL PARDON SEEMS TO BE THE BEST WAY TO AVOID FRAGMENTATION OF THE PARTY, ADIB CONTENDED, BUT THE MECHANICS OF THIS ARE NOT CLEAR.

4 COMMENT: ADIB CLEARLY WAS SPEAKING AS A PARTY FUNCTIONARY WHOSE CONCERNS RELATE TO MAINTAINING PARTY COHESION AND VOTER APPEAL. HE REPORTEDLY HAS PREVIOUS TIES WITH HARUN, AND THIS MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO HIS PRO-HARUN STANCE. THRUST OF HIS REMARKS WAS THAT PARTY RANK AND FILE DO NOT REPEAT NOT CONSIDER HARUN GUILTY OF CORRUPTION AND BELIEVE HE SHOULD BE REHABILITATED AND RESTORED TO FULL POLITICAL LIFE, INCLUDING RIGHTS TO HOLD PUBLIC OFFICE THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE BARRED TO HIM IF CONVICTIONS STAND. ASIDE FROM QUESTIONS OF DOUBLE STANDARDS INVOLVED, WE WONDER WHETHER A PARDON CAN BE ARRANGED WITHOUT IT ACTUALLY BEING SOUGHT BY HARUN, AND IN VIEW OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S AVOWED INTENT TO PRESS AHEAD WITH FURTHER CHARGES SHOULD ANY OF HARUN'S PRESENT CONVICTIONS BE OVERTURNED.  
UNDERHILL

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## Message Attributes

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**Reference:** 77 KUALA LUMPUR 1446, 77 KUALA LUMPUR 1582  
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**Review Markings:**  
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